



IT'S SPRING!

Winter has past and renewed life is appearing each day as we enjoy the freshness of a new spring. I have enjoyed the fragrance of the flowers as they lift there blossoms in praise to our wonderful Creator.

These last couple months have been occupied with folks in our county weathering the winter of life with their loved ones leaving this time frame and stepping into eternity. In each call that we respond to where death is the subject, there are at least two conditions that we are confronted with and they are: eternal blessing in the presence of Jesus or the other, eternal separation from God. Hope and hopelessness, and yet we are called to bring comfort to the hurting. It amazes me to see time and time again the mercy that Jesus extends to the world. It establishes John 3:16 again and again, "For God so love the world that he gave His only begotten son, that whosoever believes IN Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

I so appreciate His love and wisdom that He equips us with so we can be an instrument of hope to those who find themselves in a state of despair.

THE LES NELSON MEMORIAL BREAKFAST

The Chaplaincy Board voted at our last meeting to perpetuate giving honor to Retired Sheriff Les Nelson who passed away this past month and now enjoys his rewards in heaven with Jesus whom he served and worshipped. So instead of Cowlitz Chaplaincy Fund raising Breakfast we decided to call our annual fundraising breakfast the **Les Nelson Memorial Breakfast** which is our annual fundraising event to be held April 24, 2010 at the Expo Conference Center 8 to 10 a.m. The breakfast is free and we will again have a live and silent auction.

We pray that you can join us in honoring Les for his foresight in developing the Chaplaincy within his Office to serve his personnel and emergency personnel along with the community at large.

You, also, by your support and prayers qualify as a very important part of Les' vision and desire to help people who find themselves in a time of crisis. Many times these events come uninvited and at most inopportune time of one's life.

PLEASE TELL ME IT'S TRUE !!

I must be dreaming, but I could swear I am seeing the sun shining and feeling its warmth.

As we have been enjoying the signs of spring and warming days along with the anticipation of summer and all its activities let me remind each of us to take note and be very careful this year. Last year was marred so badly with 9 drowning in our local waters and the many vehicular accidents. People just being careless and having a disregard of common sense for safety propelled families in states of trauma that could have been so easily avoided.

I am already thinking of BBQs, fishing, boating, picnics, trips with my wife and kids, plus friends, moments by a fire along a beach, cooking hotdogs and marshmallows, soft music at sunset..... Ah, yes, these will be moments to remember ~ spring and summer in our beautiful state! With caution these moments do not have to be marred with a tragedy. Be safe and have fun, fun, and more fun!

Chaplain Lyle

PRAYER CHANGES THINGS

It is with great joy that I have the privilege to share a few words with you. I am Miriam Prather, wife of Chaplain Lyle. I have been married to Lyle for almost three years now and happily call Longview, Washington my home.

Moving here from Ohio was a HUGE step for me. Throughout the time of decision-making, God taught me to rely on Him and Him alone. I learned that I needed to have an attitude of prayer as I struggled with the decision to stay in Ohio or join Lyle in marriage and move here.

I am so thankful for a loving God who prepared the way; giving me a wonderful husband and helping me find my niche here in Longview.

I am a retired teacher and school psychologist. I am making good use of my training and experience by substituting as a para-educator in the Longview Schools. I am also tutoring children in reading and math. Besides these activities I stay busy taking care of Lyle and our dog, Smokey.

Having never been married before, I've had a lot to learn. Becoming the wife of a chaplain has been fun and challenging. I enjoy being able to partner with Lyle as he counsels couples and families. The challenges are the midnight calls that take him out into the night to offer comfort to a family when a loved one has died or when someone is in

crisis. I immediately start to pray for him and for those he has been called to help. I become the "chaplain" to the chaplain, helping him debrief when he returns home after a long and difficult night.

Perhaps the most important lesson I have learned is the importance of prayer in my daily walk with God. Only through quiet times of conversation with God can He strengthen and empower me to do His will.

We count on *your* prayers for *us*. Your prayer support for the Chaplaincy is critical. God's work is accomplished by those who faithfully pray. These chaplains couldn't do their job without **YOU!**

Thank you for your continued prayer and financial support for the Chaplaincy. Knowing that many are praying daily for this ministry is such a comfort and a blessing to us, the wives of the chaplains.

"Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need."

Hebrews 4:16 (NIV)

In His service,
Miriam Prather

There is a vast difference
between saying prayers
and praying.



BATTER UP!

It's baseball season in Cowlitz County! Did you know that Cowlitz County has its own team this year? The team is called the Cowlitz Blackbears. They will play at Story Field and will play thirty home games. The season begins June 4th.

The Chaplaincy has a limited number of tickets for sale for the games as a fundraiser for the Chaplaincy. The Chaplaincy receives 50% of the sale of these tickets.

The Chaplaincy will be featured at the July 2nd game. Support the Chaplaincy by purchasing a ticket from one of our chaplains and attend the game on July 2nd. Come and cheer for our new team!

**GO
BLACKBEARS!**





Last Friday night I received a phone call that once again reminded me how important the job Chaplains do is. Carmen and I were out on our “date night” when a call came from our daughter-in-law informing me that our grandson (Kyle) had been airlifted to a hospital in Springfield, Oregon. They’d just begun ‘Spring Break’ week out on the dunes in Florence. Less than an hour into their first ride on the dunes, Kyle crashed his 4-wheeler resulting in a serious concussion and fractured collarbone. The medics on scene determined it best to fly him to the hospital rather than transport via ambulance. According to the trauma doctor at Sacred Heart River Bend Hospital that was a smart move on their part. (When ‘Grandpa’ heard details of the accident I was happy they made that decision too.)



Needless to say, Carmen and I drove down to Springfield late that night and spent the next 2 days at the hospital with Kyle in ICU. I had been hoping to visit with the kids soon anyway, but this was not what I planned on. Thankfully Kyle was released the following Monday. I spoke with his mom yesterday and he is doing very well. I guess there’s something to be said for “being young” – if it’d been me who crashed I’d still be laid up!

I say all that to say this... Getting that phone call was hard to say the least. We all tend to think it won’t happen to us – that somehow we are exempt from traumatic events – that is until

one comes our way. I thought about all the people over the years that I contacted to give them “bad news” and was reminded how painful that can be. When I got the call on Kyle I began ‘flip-flopping’ back and forth between being “Chaplain” & being “Grandpa.” Granted, some of my training and experience as a Chaplain helped me process the call, but bottom line – in that moment I was “Grandpa!”

One of the first things I did was get on the computer and send an email out to some of my friends asking them to pray for Kyle and us as his family. Just knowing there would be a team of prayer warriors on the ‘front-line’ doing battle for my grand-son was encouraging and a genuine source of peace. Another encouraging thing was getting emails from some ‘friends of my friends’ telling me they were praying for Kyle too. People that I did not know and certainly people Kyle didn’t know – praying for a 17-year-old boy who crashed his ATV. Suddenly being part of a “bigger family” was brought home to me. I often hear (and have said myself), *“I don’t know how people make it through life without God,”* but I also don’t know how people make it through life without a bigger sense of family too. I am so thankful I am a part of the family of God.

Just today I received an email from our newest volunteer chaplain, Doug Fields, telling me that his brother had taken his own life yesterday. Doug’s brother battled depression for many years and it just got the best of him. By the time you read this Doug will have returned home from time with

family in North Carolina, but he will still be grieving. Doug’s “other job” is Pastor of one of our local churches. Once again I am reminded that being a ‘servant of God’ does not exempt you from facing tragedy. Most of you will never get to meet Doug, but he’s still part of the Chaplaincy ‘family.’ Will you please say a prayer for this member of our family today? Ask God to fill his heart with love and grace as he searches for strength and peace in light of his brother’s completed suicide. Ask God to help this new chaplain turn tragedy into good as he has opportunity to minister to others going through similar circum-stances in the coming days. (By the way, we are thrilled to have Doug on the team!)

In early March I watched the Nelson family walk through the death of their patriarch, Les Nelson (former Cowlitz County Sheriff and founder of the Chaplaincy). Over the years I’ve learned a lot from this family and this latest ‘lesson in life’ is one I will treasure forever. Son, Mark recently emailed me and thanked me for “being part of their family.” I’m the one who should be thankful!

What I’ve been speaking of is “FAMILY.” There is no such thing as a ‘perfect’ family (mainly because you and I aren’t perfect!). There’s an old saying; ***“Friends you can pick and choose, but family you’re stuck with.”*** Personally, I’m glad to be stuck with the family I have – all of them – my immediate one – my friends one – and my Chaplaincy family. I really don’t know how I would get through life without you. Thanks for being there! Shalom!

Chap Steve